

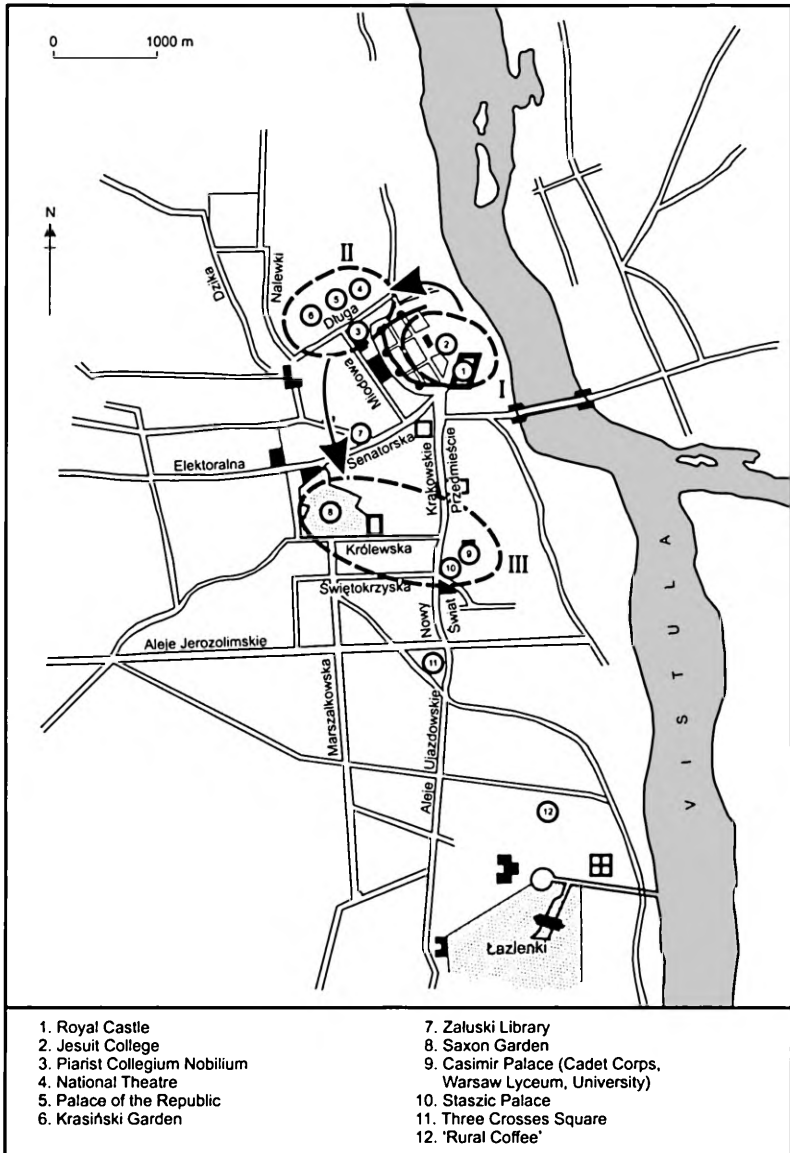
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**WARSAW AND ITS INTELLIGENTSIA:
URBAN SPACE AND SOCIAL CHANGE, 1750-1831**

In the beginning, there were cities — that is how Jacques le Goff starts his essay on medieval ‘intelligentsia’; let us start with the same phrase, although dealing with a very different epoch. Warsaw, a semi-rural capital of a rural, decentralized polity — the gentry Commonwealth — experienced a rapid growth in the second half of the 18th century.¹ The reasons were manifold, and were connected with a modernizing effort, undertaken by an enlightened generation; suffice to say that Warsaw, with some 25,000 inhabitants in the 1750s, reached almost 100,000 in the early 1790s, and half that more by 1830. It is interesting to observe how the growth of the city is accompanied by transformation of the urban public space; a transformation that produces the arena on which the new people and groups can appear. Let us have a closer look at the elements of this arena.

The first serious undertaking of the Warsaw Enlightenment was the creation of the Załuski Library, opened in 1747. Established by two brothers, both of them bishops, its collections reached the incredible number of 400,000 volumes. Its origins lie in the former epoch: the Załuski brothers were pure representatives of the Baroque enthusiasts for ‘curiosity’, their interest lay in collecting and displaying. At the same time, this sort of Baroque attitude was different from that of the ‘Sarmatian’ noble Baroque; it is anchored in the Western European tradition of *Respublica litteraria*, a supra-national community of intellectuals. The Załuski brothers tried to make the library a centre of intellectual life,

¹ For a good outline of Warsaw city’s growth cf. Eugeniusz Szwanowski, *Warszawa. Rozwój urbanistyczny i architektoniczny* (Warszawa, 1952).



Warsaw at the turn of the 19th century

The centre of urban intellectual life migrates from the limits of the old medieval borough (I) to the region of Krasiński Square in the late 18th century (II) and then, after 1815, to the vicinity of Krakowskie Przedmieście (Cracow Suburb) Street.

although they succeeded only partially; they arranged competitions and meetings, but the building of the Library was considered too far from the city centre (today it is roughly 10–15 minutes quick walk from the Old Town Market Square), and the access was difficult in bad weather, due to mud. The library — today almost incredibly — did not have a catalogue, and books were kept in thematically arranged rooms and cupboards. Many of them, though, were piled in heaps and never made accessible.

The topographical position of the library indicates already a region of crystallization of a new cultural centre of the city — one developed around the today's Krasiński Square. The old centre — Warsaw Old Town within its medieval city walls — was not completely insignificant still in the late 18th century. The Jesuit College existed there, to the east of the Old Town Market Square. On Świętojańska (St John) Street (known also as Farska, i.e. Parish Church street, from the Parish Church of St John, the future Warsaw cathedral, which stood there) booksellers open their book-stands, and displayed not only prayer books with astrological calendars, but also some 'modern', historical or medical literature. Some families of the old urban elite took part in cultural life of the city — Rev. Franciszek Bohomolec SJ, one of the leading Jesuit intellectuals of the period, wrote about meetings at the home of Dr. Czempiński, a medic and member of an old urban family (of Armenian origins); the Old Town Hall at the Market Square remained a centre of the political activities of the Third Estate during the politically tense period of the early 1790s. The new centre, however, developed to the north-west of the old one. The Załuski Library can be treated as an early signal of this transformation of urban space. Krasiński Square, situated close to the intersection of Miodowa and Długa Streets developed from the outer yard of the Krasiński Palace. Designed by the leading architect of 17th century Warsaw, Dutch-born Tylman van Gameren, in a para-classicist type of Baroque that is peculiar to this city, adorned with façade sculptures by the Gdańsk artist Andreas Schlütter, the palace was sold by the Krasiński family to the state in the early 18th century. From that time on, it served as a place of various juridical and administrative institutions until its destruction in 1944. (Rebuilt after the war, it hosts now special collections of the National Library.) The

bureaucratic elite of the Commonwealth was weak and small; central institutions in the early 1790s certainly never employed more than a few hundred persons, and not all of them did anything vaguely resembling intellectual work. Modernizing tendencies, however, aimed at closing the gap between the Commonwealth and states of enlightened absolutism, were slowly resulting in development of the bureaucratic group. In the late 18th century the ethos of the bureaucrat, visible already in the Habsburg and Hohenzollern domains, seems to be lacking; an observer in the 1820s was astonished at the hard-working habits of the state officials and sighted: 'My God, it wasn't like this before!'.² All the same, young clerks were seen on the streets of Warsaw, in theatres and public gardens, of which the most important was the Krasiński Garden, just behind the palace; at the time we talk about it started to act as an 'open salon' of Warsaw, a place to meet people and to 'be seen' on Sunday after the Mass in the Piarist church on Długa Street.

Opposite to the palace, stood the modest edifice of the National Theatre.³ Built in 1779, directed by the great entrepreneur Wojciech Bogusławski, it soon turned into one of the focal points of the Warsaw culture, reaching the climax of its influence in the hot days around 1790–4. Bogusławski, a scion of a noble family with aristocratic aspirations, was himself an excellent example of ways of formation of a new stratum. Educated at the renowned Cracow St Anna Gymnasium, he started his career in the army and suddenly — for reasons which remained obscure even to his wonderful biographer, Zbigniew Raszewski⁴ — he left the ranks and joined the theatre company, soon to become an independent entrepreneur. Bogusławski's theatre, with a royal privilege to use the name of the National Theatre, was the first commercial theatre in Poland, not aligned to ecclesiastical or aristocratic patronage. There were theatres earlier and often good ones, such as the private magnate theatres like that of the Radziwiłłs in Nieśwież, theatres run by religious orders, notably Piarists and Jesuits, e.g. the Piarist theatre of Warsaw Collegium Nobilium, or Royal

² Antoni Magier, *Estetyka miasta stołecznego Warszawy*, ed. Hanna Szwanowska (Warszawa, 1963), 53.

³ Excellent monograph: Zbigniew Raszewski, *Teatr na placu Krasińskich* (Warszawa, 1995).

⁴ *Idem*, *Bogusławski* (Warszawa, 1982).

Opera in the Saxon Garden in Warsaw, in the epoch of the Saxon kings of Wettin dynasty (the first two thirds of the 18th century). Although both theatres in colleges and Royal Opera were open to the public, they clearly operated within a certain established order — opera was one of the court institutions, above all to highlight the court festivities, whereas Piarists and Jesuits saw their theatres first of all as educational establishments, with students as actors, where theatrical production served the educational process of upbringing of perfect noblemen.

What a contrast with the Bogusławski theatre. Posters were printed and hung on the walls. Tickets were sold at the ticket offices, and the theatre served both higher and middle ranks of the capital's population. The ground-floor was left without chairs, available for cheap tickets. Boxes were partially owned by aristocrats and the rich urban patriarchate. A well-known brawl about the box of City Mayor Jan Dekert occurred in 1789, when the Speaker of the Senate, Prince Kazimierz Nestor Sapieha tried to make Dekert's wife give up her box to his relatives. Mrs Dekert not only declined to give up place but she dared to mention to Sapieha 'let the Prince remember what happens in Paris nowadays'.⁵ This story is often quoted, perhaps with some exaggeration, as proving the growing feeling of self-importance on the part of the urban elites.

In the early 19th century, chairs were introduced to the ground-floor of the theatre; this may be symbolically seen as evidence of maturing of a social group of non-noble but well-off urban theatre-goers: people who do not aspire to separate boxes, but were wealthy enough to demand seats rather than to be compelled to stand. Thus, intelligentsia – literary – finds its place in society.

The educational establishments experienced growth and transformation, and the Piarist and Jesuit Noble colleges led the tendency. The Jesuit college sited in the Old Town, close to the Jesuit church, not far from the northern side of the Market Square. Modernized in the 1750s, it encompassed all the recent innovations of Catholic Enlightenment and its teachers, including the

⁵ The story is related in a letter of King Stanislas Augustus to Augustyn Deboli, Warsaw 5 Dec. 1789, published in Jerzy Michalski, Emanuel Rostworowski and Janusz Woliński (eds.), *Materiały do dziejów Sejmu Czteroletniego*, 6 vols. (Wrocław, 1955–69), iii, 367.

afore-mentioned Bohomolec, the Rector Karol Wyrwicz, and Stefan Łuskina, soon to gain importance as a newspaper editor.

Much more important, however, was the Piarist Collegium Nobilium, at the corner of Długa and Miodowa Streets, thus just adjoining Krasiński Square. Reformed by Stanisław Konarski, the great and symbolic personality of the Polish Enlightenment educational reforms, the Collegium Nobilium soon boasted of being the most renowned and fashionable school in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Both colleges imbued their students with the ideals of *honnête homme* — ‘moderately educated, moderately progressive, moderately faithful to his king and country’,⁶ as this ideal was wryly summarized by an eminent twentieth-century historian. Both absorbed some elements of John Locke’s pedagogical ideals, both tried — following fashionable theories — to arouse love rather than fear in the hearts of their pupils (or so they claimed), both used the handbook of renowned French Jesuit author Juventius (Joseph Jouvancy) as well as the old, reprinted and re-worked a number of times, Italian handbook of good manners by Giovanni Della Casa, *Galateo*.⁷ According to a contemporary specialist on the subject (Kazimierz Puchowski), *Galateo* presented a moderately democratic version of the *honnête homme* ideal, in that it stressed not only the value of good birth but especially of personal qualifications; indeed, the latter seemed more important than the former, and thus, the way was opened to members of humbler estates to achieve, if only exceptionally, the status of well-bred gentleman.

The third important educational establishment was of a different nature and of different topographical location. The Knights’ School, or Cadets Corps, was established by the King Stanisław Augustus. The name indicated an affinity to the Baroque ‘noble academies’, the content, however, was pure Enlightenment: the school, whose commandant was Prince Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski, was aimed at creating a new educated elite, distinguished by some military knowledge, polished manners and adorned by new civic virtues. The school produced a whole generation of alumni most of whom returned to their rural gentry life, but

⁶ Władysław Konopczyński, *Stanisław Konarski* (Warszawa, 1929), 154–5.

⁷ The Polish 18th century version: Giovanni Della Casa, *Nowy Galateusz czyli ustawy obyczajności i przystojności jaka się zachowywać zwykła między ludźmi zacie urodzonymi* (Warszawa, 1793), transl. from the French, 3rd edn.

they formed a sort of canvass, of a background which provided a certain minimal level of intellectual ambitions and thus served as a reservoir which could supply new members of an educated stratum. The school topographical position also deserves attention. It was situated in the Casimir Palace (Pałac Kazimierzowski) at the edge of the broad Vistula Valley, close to the Krakowskie Przedmieście Street (the name means literally 'Cracow Suburb', or, as it used to be translated into French in the 19th century, 'Faubourg de Cracovie'). This was the earliest educational establishment on a site which since 1816 served as the main campus of the University of Warsaw. Thus Krakowskie Przedmieście enters the history of the Polish intelligentsia.

We should mention another place on the map of Warsaw, the Royal Castle, where the King Stanislas Augustus gathered artists and intellectuals, creating a sort of royal centre of patronage, which aimed at creating a political group around the king, supporting the royal reform plans. Not all the artistic fittings of the castle were due to the Polish artists, as much was simply imported from abroad; nevertheless, the castle was important. The royal archive (*Metryka Koronna*) was hosted there, the royal chemist, Stanisław Okraszewski, had his laboratory there, the most eminent historian of the epoch, ex-Jesuit Adam Naruszewicz worked there on his synthesis of Polish history that was to stress the importance of royal power for the existence of the state. Naruszewicz gathered a small team of collaborators, mainly ex-Jesuits as himself, who assisted him in collecting and copying sources for his work. The Royal Castle employed some important artists too, such as painters Marcello Baciarelli and Bernardo Belotto, the cousin of Canaletto and author of numerous Warsaw *vedute*, or sculptor André LeBrun. Last not least, the castle served as the meeting place of important bodies, such as the Komisja Edukacji Narodowej (National Education Commission), and especially of the so called Thursday dinners. This latter institution, meetings of members of cultural elite with the King, were a substitute for the non-existing cultural salon.

There was another gathering place too, the meetings of learned men at the Blue Palace (Pałac Błękitny) of Prince Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski at Senatorska Street. Both acted as a proxy of typical salon from which they differed first of all by the notable absence

of a *salonière* — a lady who would act as host and organizer of social and cultural life. Both gatherings played also a role of non-existent academy of learning or a learned society. (The Thursday dinners, true, slipped at times into an atmosphere of male drinking and smoking association.)

Finally, there is another institution that was central to the formative years of intelligentsia as a social group, and that is proper to serve as finale of this analysis: the coffee-house. The reader may be surprised to learn that there were tens of coffee-houses already in the 1780s. Some of them, surely, were just old-fashioned inns, fashionably renamed; but many of them were really coffee-houses of ‘modern’ type with newspapers, local and foreign, to be read and people to be met. ‘In order that you know what happens in Warsaw, I will tell you what I have seen at Mrs Neybert’s Coffee’ — writes one of the now forgotten poets of the period (Jan Czyży). What he saw were some romancing ladies, school students, some of the royal pages and clerks of royal chancery: a perfect observation point to study the formation of a new social group. Widow Neybert’s establishment, one of the most famous in Warsaw, was, in fact, located far away beyond the city itself: it was called ‘Wiejska kawa’ (rural coffee) and was located on what is now called Wiejska (lit. ‘rural’) Street, close to the present day (then non-existent) parliament buildings. It was a target of excursions that had to take some time. As a place of everyday meetings, probably even more important, was another institution at Długa Street, close to the Theatre, to the Piarist College, Załuski Library and Palace of the Republic (Pałac Rzeczypospolitej, former Krasiński Palace) — all the centres mentioned earlier in this essay.

Literaci, which is the translation of the Latin *literati*, was the term used to denote the new group. Their great day came at the turn of the 1780s and 1790s — the period of political turmoil, great expectations and great disillusion, started with convoking of the new Diet in 1788 (that would later be called ‘Great’ in the history textbooks), ending with the final collapse of the Polish-Lithuanian state in 1795. The radical reformers, led by Hugo Kołłątaj, the most intelligent and sharp-eyed political author of the period in Poland, were journalists, pamphleteers and satirists whose way of life, hierarchy of values, vocabulary and sense of humour differed

sharply from those of the old gentry elites. One of them, later a radical conservative, wrote after three decades a devastating portrait, which, however, is not devoid of sharp observations:

All the literate wiseacres (*mędrki piśmienne*), all those hungry scribblers, all the street rabble that tries to transfer themselves from behind the cabs to inside the cabs ... all hotheads pursuing peculiar equality and liberty, those great features of demagoguery ... formed the open and impudent party of Kołłątaj. Murder and gallows were their ideals.

All were people of ‘the same need, the same ambition, the same shortage’, and — we could add — the same education and temperament. For all of them ‘the revolutionary chaos opened a field for fulfilling their aims’⁸

Surely, something is caught in this sarcastic description: these were new people, whose education and opinions alienated them from the ruling majority and made the patriotic hopes to save the endangered homeland to go very smoothly hand in hand with their personal hopes for a system in which their virtues would find gratification easier. Apart from Kołłątaj, the most important among them was Franciszek Salezy Jezierski, author of witty pamphlets, among which the mock-dictionary of some important terms (*Niektóre wyrazy...*) deserves attention. The vibrant atmosphere of the Great Sejm (1788–92) and Kościuszko Uprising (1794) brought about the rise of printed polemical literature. The most popular pamphlets reached 10,000 printed copies, they gave rise to *Responses* and they in turn to the *Responses to responses*. A communicative community, to use a pretentious phrase, was thus formed, whose importance for the transformation of the intellectual elites is difficult to exaggerate.

At the same time, these radical politicians were only a segment, if at times best visible, of the whole educated community. This community found its natural milieu in the new-born institutions of the state bureaucracy while, however, remaining extremely weak until the collapse of the Commonwealth in 1795. Another source of their recruitment was noble and aristocratic protection, on the part of the high nobility and aristocracy, looking for ‘governors’

⁸ Antoni Trębicki, *Opisanie Sejmu 1793. O rewolucji 1794*, ed. Jerzy Kowecki (Warszawa, 1967), 227.

for their children, court doctors or teachers of music, and thus creating a market for the urban educated stratum.

Thus we come to a problem the discussion of which has taken already tons of paper and ink for the last century and half. Who, actually, were these new intellectuals? The debate was dominated by the thesis of gentry-intelligentsia continuity, put forward in a developed form by a sociologist Józef Chałasiński in 1946, but occasionally presented earlier for a long time. Apart from the notorious incredibility of the numbers relating to the late 18th century social structures, as well as the unclear definition of social estates (how do we define the nobility, the peasantry, etc?), the thesis seems plausible only to a very limited extent. In the 18th century we meet some descendants of the noble families among the educated — Hugo Kołłątaj and Franciszek Salezy Jezierski are the best examples, but I would like to turn attention to the two other sources of recruitment. First, as mentioned earlier, there were the magnate servants, notably private teachers and private doctors, most of them from abroad. Their number, as far as I know, has never been established by historians, but obviously there were enough of them to influence the nature of social transformation in Polish lands. Once in Poland, they were not doomed to remain servants for the rest of their days; they created a sort of capital of abilities from which various institutions could draw if necessary. Thus physicians could become military surgeons in the army that underwent a process of reform in the early 1790s; after the collapse of the state they did not need to return to their old patrons but became private practitioners. To quote another instance of 'imported' intellectuals, let us just recall Samuel Bogumił Linde, a German-speaking citizen of Toruń who becomes a librarian of the magnate Ossoliński and then, in the early 19th century, already under the Prussian rule, headmaster of the new and prestigious Liceum Warszawskie (Warsaw Lyceum). The magnate family of princes Czartoryski builds a whole network of protégés and thus becomes one of the most important factors — in an institutional sense too — of building the new educated class. These protégés were both small and middle nobility, some plebeians and some foreigners.

Apart from the magnates and their clients, there was another road through which the new group was formed: the Church, and

especially both most important educational orders, the Piarists and the Jesuits. Both presented the Polish Enlightenment with some of its most devoted and intelligent activists; whereas (in spite of some recent claims) the role of the Piarists in educational reform still seems central, the importance of the Jesuits (or rather ex-Jesuits) for the formation of the new intelligentsia is immense. The dissolution of the Order by Pope Clement XIV in 1773 came as a shock for the Polish enlightened generation. The situation was different than for example in France where the enlightened elite looked at the Jesuits as defenders of superstition and clericalism. In Poland the danger was that the accumulated potential of knowledge and educational facilities, resting within the Jesuit order would be lost. This danger was clearly understood by the King Stanislas Augustus, who decided to do his best to retain the human potential of the former Jesuits as the executors of his plans of enlightened reforms. He wrote to one of his closest protégés, the ex-Jesuit historian Adam Naruszewicz:

[The Jesuits] are everywhere the wisest and the best ... If in Poland they were teaching badly and thus became noxious for the nation ... in last 20 years they became better than all other teachers. It was enough to correct them, not to destroy them ... If we cannot preserve the Order, let us conserve, protect and encourage the ex-Jesuits to further works ...⁹

Let us only imagine: a group of people, educated much better than average, accustomed to live in a community, was suddenly 'thrown out' into the secular world. They became journalists, teachers, officials, authors, and they always cultivated at least some of the bond that used to keep them together. Naruszewicz missed no opportunity to back his former compatriots with the King. The King accepted this; as mentioned above, he wished to make the Jesuits the vanguard of reform. According to the best specialist on the subject, among the most frequent guests of the royal Thursday dinners, that is more or less a majority, were former members of the Society of Jesus.¹⁰

⁹ Stanislas Augustus to Adam Naruszewicz, September 1773, in Adam Naruszewicz, *Korespondencja*, ed. Julian Platt (Wrocław, 1959), 10–11.

¹⁰ Roman Kaleta, 'Obiady czwartkowe na dworze króla Stanisława Augusta (próba monografii)', *Studia Warszawskie*, xvi, 2: *Warszawa XVIII wieku* (1973), 59.

In some sense, if only half-seriously, we could perhaps talk about the 'Piarist-Jesuit' genesis of the Polish intelligentsia. Such a claim is obviously exaggerated, but probably no more so than the old thesis about the gentry origins of the intelligentsia.

The end of the old Polish-Lithuanian state created a new situation in almost every respect. Warsaw became a provincial Prussian town, the Habsburgs took territories extending to the Pilica and Bug rivers, thus coming close to Warsaw, whereas Russia, for the first time in its history, moved westwards up to roughly the present day western frontier of Belarus. What is even more important, a new type of political organization appeared, at least in the Prussian and Austrian partitions: the ancient Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, a typically early modern estate political entity, being in fact close to a corporation of nobility, is replaced by a modern (in the 19th century sense of the term) unitary bureaucratic state. This process started already during last decades of the old Commonwealth, with the growth of the first central institutions, as mentioned earlier. The introduction of the Prussian bureaucratic system, however, accelerated this process considerably. Then came a turning point of our story: in the winter of 1806/7 Napoleon conquered the central Polish territories, hitherto under the Prussian rule, and created a semi-independent state called the Duchy of Warsaw. It is essential to the future fates of the intelligentsia *in statu nascendi* that the new Napoleonic state inherited the Prussian institutions, mixing them with the equally centralizing and bureaucratic spirit of the French revolution. Napoleon did not risk entrusting Kołłataj and his radical supporters with the ruling positions in the Duchy, but retained a more moderate team of politicians at its fore; nevertheless, the administrative system of the new state was brand new. Central administrative institutions were accompanied by the local prefects in the departments (as the old voivodships were now called) together with their administrative apparatus. Professional administration occupied the place of the gentry self-government, and professional judiciary took the place of the old estate noble court system. Of course, the nobility retained its social preponderance and managed to occupy many new job opportunities; nevertheless, the new system created a new internal logics of its own. The state started to create a demand for the intelligentsia:

this feature determined the character of the Polish educated stratum for the next generation.

I shall not even attempt to enumerate all the new institutions that grew up in Warsaw in the first three decades of the 19th century. The lyceum at Krakowskie Przedmieście, at the place of the former Cadet Corps; the huge palace of the Treasury at the square named plac Bankowy (Bank Square) from that period on; the educational Institute established at the Alexander Square for the blind and deaf-mute, and retaining its old building until now, even if the place is now called plac Trzech Krzyży (Three Crosses Square); we could mention the Mostowski Palace a bit to the west from the central district, which served as the Ministry of Police and at the same time the meeting point of an informal association of art and literary critics.

In the Napoleonic times, the preponderance of the Krasiński Square with surroundings as Warsaw's centre of gravity remains unchallenged. The Palace of the Republic sheltered administrative and juridical institutions as it did before, the National Theatre, directed by Bogusławski until his death in 1828, continued to serve as one of the central cultural institutions, and the Piarist gymnasium was, as before, one of the most prestigious secondary schools in the capital. Krasiński Garden still served as a meeting point and an open-air salon. The only missing piece of the puzzle was the Załuski Library, sent to St Petersburg after 1795. Miodowa Street ('Honey' Street, named after ginger bread producers, settled here in earlier times), connecting Krasiński Square with Krakowskie Przedmieście is renamed Napoleon Street. It is a notable feature of the material infrastructure of the city that it was not paved, nor was the Krasiński Square (at least not all of it), although it was then the most ostentatious square in the city, with the parades of the Duchy's army in its wonderfully colorful uniforms.

The situation changed after 1815. The Congress of Vienna diminished the Duchy of Warsaw, handing over Poznań and Toruń departments to Prussia; the rest was made the Polish Kingdom, with its own constitution, in personal union with the Russian Empire. While lacking an independent foreign policy, it enjoyed all appearances of sovereignty, and had in reality broad internal autonomy, although the Russian interests were carefully

looked after by Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich, whose real position in the Kingdom by far transgressed his official stance as commander in chief of the Polish Army. Now, the government of the Kingdom, with many activists from the Napoleonic times still playing the leading roles, undertook a broad campaign of urban modernization: campaign, the breadth of which is even now testified by classicist city halls in numerous towns of central Poland.

The growth of Warsaw was most imposing. The whole town sprouted new living quarters, with the Nowy Świat (New World) Street and its surroundings being built up with tenant houses; the customs gates at the present plac Unii Lubelskiej (The Union of Lublin Square) and on the Brześć road, as well as (destroyed during World War II) in the present day plac Zawiszy (Zawisza Square) testify to the long perspective of urbanizing vision: these limits were filled with urban type buildings only in the early 20th century. A large part of the beneficiaries of this new urban growth was the new intelligentsia that manned more and more numerous institutions. This growth of the city caused another shift in the urban center of gravity, which moved from Krasiński Square to Krakowskie Przedmieście, which slowly acquired an air of a typical 'intelligentsia street' which it has retained at least partially until today. It is interesting to remember that Krakowskie Przedmieście, a street of aristocratic urban palaces built outside the walls of the medieval municipality, was in the 17th and 18th centuries a typical 'noble' street.¹¹ The University was opened in the Casimir Palace, the former seat of the Warsaw Lyceum and — earlier still — of the Cadet Corps. The first departments were Law and Medicine opened respectively (as separate schools) in 1808 and 1809, so still in the Napoleonic times. The full university was chartered by Alexander I in 1816, and it started operation two years later. Rev. Wojciech Szweykowski, a Piarist, became the rector. As a teacher during the Prussian rule, he had an opportunity to gain a study stay in Berlin, and was thus acquainted with the Prussian educational system. His position is a good example of the continued existence of the tradition of Piarist education. In

¹¹ Cf. Stanisław Życiński, *Spółeczeństwo Krakowskiego Przedmieścia, magnacko-szlacheckiej enklawy Warszawy w latach 1656–1854* (Szczecin, 1991).

a beautiful speech at the opening of the University he stressed the necessity of educational freedom, giving — in a very enlightened liberal way — a parallel with the river which destroys land if you try to stop its flow by force, but flows peacefully if you open its way.

The university was opened some ten years after Wilhelm von Humboldt had organized the new university in Berlin — a university that was supposed to create an appropriate atmosphere for *Bildung*, or research combined with the cultivation of individuality. In a sense, the medieval university as an intellectual centre was to be re-created in a new form. The University of Warsaw, however, belonged still to the earlier epoch: it was a university in an Enlightenment utilitarian style, created to provide the expanding state institutions with an adequate number of trained bureaucrats rather than to foster research and private studies. It was clear especially with the first two departments, medicine being meant to serve the army, and law — to provide civil servants. The same was, however, the case with other departments; it is worth noting that theology was very much in the Josephinist tradition which saw the clergy as servants of the state. Such, at least, was the case in first years of university's existence.

Close to the university another institution of central importance for the Polish intellectual life appeared in the 1820s: the Staszic Palace, the home of the Królewskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk (Royal Society of the Friends of Learning). The Society itself was established in Prussian Warsaw in 1800 as a late realization of the long-overdue projects of establishing a central Academy of Sciences and at the same time as an expression of cultural pessimist mood after the final partition that called for sheltering the language and other remnants of the defunct polity. After some time it gained its permanent seat in the old canon houses behind the Old Town Parish Church (that became a cathedral in 1798). Only now, in the 1820s, its President, Stanisław Staszic, one of the most important personalities of the Polish Enlightenment, founded its new, elegant seat on Krakowskie Przedmieście, close to the university. Parallel with this the Krasinowski Garden was slowly losing its status of the open-air salon of Warsaw, the same role being slowly accepted assumed by the Saxon Garden, much closer to Krakowskie Przedmieście, and its institutions. In this region Lourse

and Semadeni opened their coffee-houses, which retained their importance until World War II. With moving the place of military parades from Krasieński Square to Saxon Square (which, under the name Piłsudski Square, hosts them even now), the transformation of the urban space was completed for a long time.

All these spatial transformations caused a revolution in the life-style. The new officials, teachers, journalists or authors lived sometimes in the premises of their working place: thus some professors of the Warsaw Lyceum lived at the school building and some years later some officials of the Royal Society of the Friends of Learning had their flats in the Staszic Palace. Some state officials' flats were located in the same building as their offices. In the majority of cases, however, the new intelligentsia lived in new apartment buildings: a flat, not an independent house or a room in the employer's palace becomes the natural *habitus* of educated persons. A flat, not necessarily very big, maybe of two or three rooms, becomes place of social events and of intellectual debates.

The popular columnist of that time (writing under the pen-name 'Hermit from the Cracow Suburb'), describes the torments of an intellectual who had to rent a new flat when the small house in which he lived was to be demolished to give place to a new apartment house — a subject that must have seemed very timely at the moment of the building boom. Especially his books, 'more than five hundred volumes', suffer when transported by the hired workers.¹² In another place he describes in detail an office, which — in its adherence to formal rules, in hierarchical structure, in secrecy of its bureaucratic proceedings could present itself to the observers as an epitome of the new urban life style.

The first floor both in the front building and in the side annex, was occupied by the administrative unit. In the first room beadles, in the second room clerks supervised by a special Superintendent were all occupied by preparing official writings, each clerk for a different destination. Nothing could be heard there apart from silent murmur of pens, scratching on paper ... The inscription on the door of the Secretary's office: 'No Entry' warned us not to pass the mysterious thresholds of this temple of officialdom.¹³

¹² Gerard Maurycy Witowski, *Pustelnik z Krakowskiego Przedmieścia czyli charakter y ludzi i obyczajów*, i-ii, 2nd edn (Warszawa, 1828), ii, 200–13 (text from 1817).

¹³ Witowski, *Pustelnik*, iii–vi (Warszawa, 1828–9), iii, 148–9 (text from 1818).

The new life–style was marked even stronger in the whole rhythm of the urban life. The ‘Hermit’ describes the timetable of a Warsaw day and tries to construct ‘a chronometer of urban morals in order to measure the normal time of a capital city’. Starting with moments before dawn (soldiers begin their exercises) and ending at midnight (people returning home from parties and other social meetings) he describes what happens in the city hour by hour. At seven o’clock pupils, ‘books under their arm, breakfast in hand’, hurry to their schools; at nine, the clerks ‘of every possible colour, embroidery and cut’ [of their uniforms — MJ] enter their offices, at ten, the meetings of important administrative bodies begin, etc.¹⁴ The idea is taken from a French muster and the examples may be also adopted from foreign authors; we should not seek a faithful detailed view of Warsaw life in the quoted description. What is important is that the new educated stratum forms one of the central groups (together with aristocracy, the traders, artisans and urban poor) that build together a general picture of the city. Hours when classes started, offices opened and governing bodies met form the landmarks of the urban time. It would not have been so even a quarter century earlier.

The rhythm of the urban life had its yearly cycles too. The town was for winter, the country for the summer — not unlike the rhythm of the aristocracy and high nobility, with the important difference that the nobility had their first home out of town and only as far as finances permit spent the winter (or at least the carnival) in the capital, whereas the educated had a different lifestyle: spending almost the whole year in the city, they longed — money permitting — to spend the summer in the country, if not for themselves, at least for their children. Some of them had relatives in the gentry manors; those who did not, rented a house or flat: thus, in a story for children, adapted from the French and ‘acculturated’ to Warsaw circumstances, the wife and little daughter of a high official spend their summer out of Warsaw, in a small house ‘close to Mokotów’, not far from the Royal Baths¹⁵ (Łazienki Królewskie; i.e. quite in the centre of Warsaw from the present day perspective). The longing for rural life as a repository

¹⁴ Witowski, *ibidem*, 164–71.

¹⁵ ‘Dzbanek z poziomkami’, *Gazeta Polska*, cxlvii (29 May 1827), 580 (adapted from the French story by Mrs Bouilly).

of virtues has, obviously, a very long and respectable literary tradition; this was, however, the first generation in Poland which actually spent their life in a city big enough for them to actually feel separated from nature and they were willing to pay in order to leave the town for a few weeks.

The growing importance of the bureaucratic sphere manifested itself, like everywhere in Europe, in the growing popularity of the uniform as the basic male costume. Soon after the University of Warsaw had been established, somebody proposed that the professors of the new University should wear gowns. It is interesting to observe what resistance this very idea caused among the enlightened professors. Gowns, these remnant of gothic barbarity, of the epoch of feudalism and superstition, have to give way to uniforms that epitomize modernity, rationality and stress the fact that the professors are state officials, like all other bureaucrats. The very possibility that gowns, as an allusion to medieval university tradition, may be understood as symbols of academic freedom and of autonomy of the university vis-à-vis the state, did not seem to occur to anyone. The autonomy of corporations, whether universities, guilds, provinces, or religious establishments, seemed to this generation a dangerous remnant of feudal exclusivity (*wylączność*), as Stanisław Staszic used to say (of the estate system as we would have said today). For this late Enlightenment generation concepts like individual liberty, religious tolerance, strong state and centralization seemed to be very strongly related and conditioned by one another.

This new intellectual-bureaucratic stratum that may have numbered in Warsaw some few thousand people, including families — is it intelligentsia in the sense that we are accustomed to give to this word? Only partially. Whatever we intuitively tend to call 'intelligentsia' has around it a sort of aura of mission and sacrifice — of a romantic democratic patriotism with certain undertone of tragic sense of impotence. In the period before 1830, it was, if not completely missing, at least not dominant. It appeared at certain moments: Waclaw Berent, in his thought-provoking (if almost unreadable due to stylistic mannerisms) essays, traced the origins of this attitude to the turn of 19th century, obviously having in mind the comparison between the post-1795 conspiracies and the independence movement in his own times, i.e. before and during

World War I.¹⁶ Usually, however, another attitude predominated. It stemmed first of all from the fact that between 1807 and 1831, between the creation of the Napoleonic Duchy of Warsaw and the collapse of the November 1830 Uprising, the state ruling in the central Polish territories was a Polish state — not having full sovereignty in terms of great politics, but securing employment for the Polish educated stratum. This made the educated more or less loyal to the existing order.

We could perhaps risk a generalization that conspiracies, insurrections and sacrifices did not figure pre-eminently in the minds of the educated elite before 1830. They believed rather in a sort of patriotism that goes together easily with the loyalty to the monarch (witness their joy at the coronation of Nicholas I in 1829!)¹⁷ and saw their mission as hard work at enlightening the country rather than as a necessity to conspire and die. Their monarchic loyalty was at least partially grounded in the belief that modernization (they did not know the term, but they understood very well the idea behind it) should be fostered from above and the enlightened monarch was the best institution to fulfill that task. Were we to schematize crudely, we should perhaps say that those with closer gentry background believed the enlightened nobility remained and should have remained the centre of the political world and the strongest reformatory force in the country. Those more distant from the gentry tradition preferred the strong monarchic power as the agent of enlightened reforms. We may say that enlightened gentry liked Montesquieu with his idea of nobility as an ‘intermediary body’, and warrant of political liberty, whereas the urban intellectuals preferred Voltaire with his vision — best expressed in his *Siècle de Louis XIV^e* — of benevolent enlightened monarch, raising his country from barbarity. This scheme should be treated with a certain reserve — the clear distinction between the two groups is impossible to make — nevertheless it may help us to notice that the urban intelligentsia already in the late 18th century had started to express its own, separate political position. Their modernizatory programmes already in the late 18th century bear close resemblance to all that that would be

¹⁶ Waclaw Berent, *Nurt; Diogenes w kontuszu; Zmierch wodzów: opowieści biograficzne*, ed. Włodzimierz Bolecki (Kraków, 1991).

¹⁷ For an excellent analysis of the enthusiasm during Nicholas’ coronation cf. Alina Witkowska, *Kazimierz Brodziński* (Warszawa, 1968), 134 ff.

pronounced by the next generations for the next 200 years and which would in the 1840s gain the name of 'organic work'.

Enlightened monarchist reformism seems to survive until 1830, its supporters endowing with their hopes and expectations first King Stanislas Augustus, then (after 1807) — Napoleon and still later, after 1815 — Emperor and King Alexander. The dependence on the bureaucratic state after 1807 only strengthens this tendency. We may perhaps assume that the pattern of development of the Polish educated stratum in the first third of the 19th century resembled, to a certain degree, the German model. What was in process of creation in Poland, was a German-type *Bildungsbürgertum*, a stratum of loyal state servants, professing moderate Enlightenment ideals and close to *Biedermeier* in their cultural instincts.

The anti-Russian uprising of 1830/31 changed all that. The separate constitutional position of the Polish Kingdom lay in tatters. The victorious tsar Nicholas I preserved the administrative autonomy but abolished most of the institutions that gave the Kingdom its separate political status: the army, the Diet, the University, even the Society of the Friends of Learning. Although most of the bureaucracy remained Polish, opportunities for career and for education diminished dramatically. At the same time, the pressure of the patriotic Romantic ideology, developed mainly in exile in France modified the intellectual milieu. The political situation changed, as did the mental climate. Moderate ideals of the late Enlightenment gave way to Romantic excess. The national fight for independence, democracy, messianism became slogans of the day; and diminishing career possibilities at home made the educated stratum more susceptible to them. A new understanding of patriotism appears, together with new conceptualization of relations between 'us', Poles, and 'them', the partitioners. Together they would form the central features of Polish culture at least until 1989, and perhaps until this very day. All this meant that the German type of development of the educated stratum — one that would have resulted in the *Bildungsbürgertum* — was closed for the Polish lands. An ethos of intelligentsia was born, the analysis of which cannot be our task in the present essay.

In spite of this profound change, the period before 1831 deserves the diligent attention of the historian of the Polish educated

stratum: the group, created by the enlightened reforms between the 1760s and 1820s did not disappear, it evolved gradually; and it bequeathed to the following generations a full range of ideas, phrases and problems from which to build new political programmes, new ideals and new patterns of behaviour. Without turning attention to the epoch of the Polish Enlightenment, all this would have been inexplicable.